Minutes of UG4 Staff Student Liaison Committee Meeting

15th January 2024 from 14:00 to 15:00, Appleton Tower 8.02

Attendees

Year Organiser: Adam Lopez

COs: Hiroshi Shimodaira, David Sterratt, Bjoern Ross, Nigel Goddard, Kartic Subr, Pavlos Andreadis.

UG4/5 Student reps: Guifu Liu, Nisar Khan, Ayaan Hashim.

ITO: Yesica Marco Azorin

1. Introduction

The Year Organiser and Course Secretary welcomed the attendees and outlined the purpose of the SSLC.

2. Comments on UG4 Courses

Informatics Project Proposal (Graduate Apprenticeship)

No comments

Modelling of Systems for Sustainability

Students enjoyed the small sized class. They also enjoyed the fact that the course is interdisciplinary, something that does not happen in other INF courses.

CW2 required a lot of effort: "2nd coursework is awesome but a lot of work".

It would have been preferred if the course was taught across the full year, however the CO mentioned that this would be an issue with students from other Schools.

Other comments included: "small class size is excellent as we get lots of face time with the lecturers and each other. Very well taught and fun coursework."

Bioinformatics 1

Comments from the students included:

"Genuinely fun, interesting and manageable coursework."

"Enjoyed getting stuck in with the coursework, coding was all enjoyable and problems were interesting."

Students were apprehensive about the "bio" side of the course however the CWs and content were manageable and it didn't require prior bio knowledge.

Comments mentioned that the CW marking was dubious, second coursework was marked "much harsher".

Tutorials were not useful; students mention that the tutorials didn't require any thinking.

Computer Graphics: Rendering

Positive feedback. The CW was interesting, fun and engaging. There were clear expectations on what was required: "CGR was an amazing course with really fun and interesting courseworks"

It would be beneficial to have more information and resources on how to render images, more signposting on this.

Human-Computer Interaction (Level 11)
"Good content, good courseworks".

Some students reported that the content of the lectures wasn't substantial and that there wasn't much in-person activity, the lectures were re-recorded from 3 years ago.

Figma is needed and this wasn't specified nor it is taught in the course. It would be good to have tutorials or labs for this course (maybe on Figma).

Modelling Concurrent Systems (Level 11)
No comments

Principles and Design of IoT Systems
Comments regarding heavy workload:

"We had to collect data, write a 3000 word survey paper, train models, develop an app, perform a peer review, a demo and then write a 10,000 word report that's due in the first week of Sem 2. This meant that a lot of us were working during the winter break which is supposed to be a break for us. The marking criteria was released at the beginning of the year which stated what the accuracies of the models should be to get the marks but some of the data was quite poor and the level of accuracy expected was unachievable. The course expects you have done MLP before the course but the course is available for UG4 and up and you cannot MLP in UG3. So a lot of us lacked the skills and had to put extra hours learning it."

There is no learning about IOT systems, just machine learning models.

Types and Semantics for Programming Languages
No comments

Computing in the Classroom – Year Course
Students enjoyed the smaller class size and the way that the lectures were structured (as these were a mix between tutorial and lecture, which works for smaller class sizes).

"Enjoyed that it left it up to you to explore what you found interesting, and that they didn't shy away from the use of generative AI but instead tried to encourage understanding of when it worked well"

There isn't much engagement during Semester 1. Suggestion that there could be tangible reward for students who were actively involved: "if a student didn't want to then they didn't really have to do anything all semester. Even for students who were more actively involved there could still be some more tangible reward for getting involved".

There wasn't enough emphasis on the project at the end of the semester during the course. It could be clearer what is expected of students during class.

Honours Project (Data Science Graduate Apprenticeship) – Honours Project (Informatics) – MInf Project (Part 1) – MInf Project (Part 2) – Year Course
Students would want more support on how to write their dissertations, maybe workshops. Writing the background chapter was useful.

Supervisors don't give feedback on how to write the dissertations.

Question about how the dissertations are marked. The marking guidelines are available [here](#).

If supervisors are being over ambitious with the goals of the projects and students have concerns, they should contact the CO, Hiroshi Shimodaira.

Machine Learning Practical – Year Course

Positive feedback on content and interesting courseworks: "Looking forward to MLP large project in Sem 2."

CW is well structured and students understand what they are meant to do.

Regarding CW2, there are comments regarding marking and the rubric not being clear.

Not all questions have been answered in Piazza.

Text Technologies for Data Science – Year Course

Positive feedback.

It is clear that lecturers enjoy teaching this course.

Mention about error in marking of CW1 which was addressed and fixed straight away.

Extreme Computing

"Lectures were delivered well, both lecturers good at answering questions during lectures."

Exam is worth 100% and in the exam students had to write code. Suggestion that this could have been a coding CW as writing code in an exam is not useful.

Machine Learning and Pattern Recognition

"The course website was amazing, hypothesis (the piazza alternative we used) worked great and I honestly think it works better than most things, if more courses used this structure and this software I believe things would be easier. The ability to directly ask questions / clarification on direct parts helps a lot. Great use of questions throughout."

Exam was hard and different from other years. Students that put a lot of effort in this course are worried that they might fail/get low marks.

Secure Programming

"Very interesting course."

The CWs and exam were hard because they weren't about concepts studied during class. Labs did not help with this and lectures covered the material very briefly.

Computational Neuroscience

The amount of work required for this course is nearly amount of a 20 credits course and this is a 10 credits course.

Formal Verification

No comments

Randomized Algorithms

No comments

Introduction to Quantum Computing

No comments

Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers
No comments

Knowledge Graphs – SEM 1
No comments

3. Comments on other courses

Algorithms and Data Structures – Year 3 course
"Algorithm and Data Structures exam was extremely hit or miss for people. Only proofs, where all of them were of a style where you know it or you don't. Thus I expect extremely high variance and lots of people getting near 0 if they didn't revise for exactly those questions. All earlier exams had some calculations and sub questions which allow for students to get some points at least."

Computer Architecture and Design – Year 3 course
"very interesting"

"CARD had bad structure on getting CW1 marked in the labs, not enough lab sessions for everyone to get marked. CARD lectures some had missing audio with no re-record or backup available"

Introduction to Mobile Robotics – Year 3 course
The exam material is different from the CWs which means that it's more material to learn.

Sytem Design Project – Year 3 course
Lack of communication on marks from last year (course affected by MAB) and when the marks are going to be released. Not clarity on marking system. Lack of communication of how previous marks have been awarded.

Introduction to Databases – Year 3 course
Recommendation to avoid having 2 hour lectures and instead having more 1 hour lectures.

4. General issues about the year and specific courses
Appleton Tower closes quite early and students would want to stay after 20:00. Questions whether 24 hour access is possible

Question regarding "effort hours" specified per CWs. This is not arbitrary but is also an estimation as each person will need different times to complete specific CWs.

It would be beneficial for the students to have more contact with other supervisors, COs or even research/PhD staff.

Students are very happy with the new Student Advisor system however they miss the Personal Tutor as they had the academic knowledge that SAs don't have, but this is why the cohort leads

5. Comments on InfBase
Contracts were issued late.

6. Comments on Computer Facilities, labs, study spaces and social spaces
Limited access to DICE machines

Access to Forum: students were advised that they would have access to the Forum this semester but this has not happened, any updates or communications on this?

7. Comments on Computing Support

No comments

8. Comments on ITO Support

No comments